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Abraham Lincoln has said:

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive . . . to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

The great war president longed for peace, and it is appropriate that the greatest peaceful work of our people as a whole—a tremendous highway uniting a nation in the bond of brotherhood—should also be a great national defense against war, giving us the means of preserving the peace of our people and the tranquility of our homes against all nations, as well as being a most stupendous memorial conception to the honor of Lincoln.

It has remained for the European war and its bloody lesson of unpreparedness to bring out in an emphatic way another and hitherto disregarded reason why we should unite as a nation in pushing through to completion the Lincoln Highway and its connecting roads.

AGRICULTURAL EFFICIENCY A FOUNDATION FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE

BY HOWARD H. GROSS

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AGRICULTURE was not only the first, but it is the greatest of the world's industries. One of the sons of our first parents tended the flocks, while the other one tilled the soil. From that day to this, agriculture has led in the advance of civilization, and its status is practically an index of it. The principal needs of mankind and most of the wealth of the world come from the upper two feet of ground. No nation of large area ever became great and remained so that did not feed its people from its own soil. It is a matter of history that the neglect of agriculture marked the beginning of the end of the Roman Empire. One of the highest duties and principal safeguards of any country is a provision for a sure and inexhaustible food supply, and this, if possible, should be produced within its own borders. In our opportunity to do this, we are fortunately situated. God's best physical gift to man is a fertile land that is spread unevenly over a portion of the earth's surface, and of which we have a generous allotment. It is our duty to use and not abuse this great heritage.

In the early days of the republic, when there seemed almost as much fertile land as sky, we were prodigal in the use of the soil, we abused our birthright, and for a hundred years, spreading from a fringe on the Atlantic coast to the golden sands of the Pacific, we have been depleting our soil by one of the most prodigal, wasteful methods of agri-

culture ever known. Fortunately, our people awakened to the danger, and they did it none too soon. Far-seeing men, more than a generation ago, became alarmed at the trend of agriculture. It became apparent that something must be done. Growing out of this, the first notable step was taken in the passage of the Morrill Act in 1861, establishing agricultural colleges by land grant. This was succeeded by other acts of Congress, such as the Hatch act, the Adams act and the Nelson amendment, which have amplified and strengthened the colleges, created experiment stations, and, through these, a vast body of knowledge has been created relating to the subject of agriculture, the intelligent application of which makes it literally possible to make two blades of grass grow where one had grown before, and to make grass grow in localities where it never had grown before; and at the same time to build up the soil to even greater fertility. No greater work for our country could possibly be done.

The latest and probably the most notable enactment ever made by any government for the advance of agriculture and civilization was the late Smith-Lever agricultural extension act that came into operation July 1, 1914. In referring to this act, the distinguished Secretary of Agriculture, in his report for 1914, says:

This measure is of vast significance. It is one of the most striking educational measures ever adopted by any government. It recognizes a new class of students, a class composed of men and women working at their daily tasks on the farm. The federal and the state governments take the adult farmer and the farm woman, as well as the farm boy and the farm girl, as their pupils. The measure provides for cooperation between states and the federal government, it guarantees a coordination of the forces of the two jurisdictions, it places the plans of the two great agencies in conjunction, eliminates waste and friction and insures efficiency.

Good judges are in agreement that the logical sequence of this great enactment, supplemental to those going before it, is that the great industry of agriculture will become more profitable to the man upon the soil and more interesting to his children. It means a redirection of agriculture upon scientific lines. It means efficiency, it means a higher and a better civilization. It will help build up our rural communities and, without doubt, will serve to check the enormous drift from the country to the city. This was the result of the application of a plan less perfect in Western Europe. It will do much to stabilize our industries and enable us to weave a strong industrial fabric without which we could not hope to reach a high degree of national efficiency.

Should we ever be called upon to defend our national honor or existence by force of arms, our strength and our ability to do so successfully must rest upon our ability to respond to the nation's need in food and wealth as truly as with cannon and battleships. Even with a low average acre yield, the total value of the output of our soil from all

sources is approximately ten billion dollars per year, a sum so vast that the mind can not grasp it. The Dutch Commissioner of Agriculture told me, while driving over Holland and discussing the progress that had been made in his interesting country, that, in his opinion, the Smith-Lever enactment was the greatest piece of constructive legislation in all history. He remarked: "You have now approximately one hundred millions of people and in fifty years, if you go on with your wonderful progress, you will have two hundred millions." Our yield of cereals per acre is less than that of Western Europe, so we have a wonderful opportunity to increase our production, and those in a position to judge best agree that it is conservative to assume that within ten or fifteen years at most the value of our soil output will have increased at least fifty per cent., or an annual increase of wealth of five billions of dollars. This colossal sum is five times greater than the combined capital-stock of all the national banks in the United States, and is twice as great as the combined earnings of all the railroads in the land. Thus we see that the future holds for us a great opportunity. Shall we measure up to it?

The destruction of life and property in modern warfare is appalling. It is no longer a battle of men, but a conflict of machines and chemicals. God grant that we soon reach a point in the world's civilization where differences between nations will be adjudicated on the basis of moral right instead of physical might. But until that time shall come, it is essential that every nation should be prepared to defend itself against any aggressor. While we are comparatively isolated from the world's troubled centers, I believe we are facing a situation of grave peril. This awful conflict in Europe in eighteen months has caused a money waste, aside from the destruction of public and private property, that approximates the startling sum of forty billions of dollars. This colossal figure represents an amount practically equal to the cash value of all farm property in the United States.

This conflict must end when human endurance has reached its limit or cash and credit have been exhausted. In the aftermath, democracy will be put to the supreme test. Our own country will remain as the world's money center and will be the chief creditor nation of the world. Our wealth will excite the envy of all the nations, and with a storehouse so overloaded with the good things of life, it may be a temptation to those nations that have suffered so severely, but that are yet strong in army and navy, to insist upon some readjustment of the world's wealth. Are they not in a position to enforce such a demand upon us as matters now stand? I am not an alarmist, but our situation is such that it demands immediate and patriotic consideration by every thoughtful citizen.

The world is amazed at the wonderful resourcefulness, strength and

efficiency Germany has shown in the last eighteen months. For the solution we have not far to go. It lies in the fact that thirty years ago the Empire began a systematic and scientific development of all its industries, including agriculture. The government assumed as its duty the correlation and direction of the industries and the development of its resources, and it has done so until they have reached the highest standard of efficiency that has so far been attained. Their handling of the tariff is a lesson to the world. In dealing with this subject, the purpose from the first was not to build up individual and favored industries, but to strengthen the Fatherland. The tariff was handled along scientific lines and every industry was given due consideration. On the other hand, this subject with us has been a question of pull, politics and favoritism. If the unnecessary economic waste that our method of dealing with the tariff has brought upon us for the last thirty years could be totaled, the amount would be appalling. Germany's science, Germany's forethought and industry has enabled her to weave the most wonderful industrial fabric the world has so far known; and this is the foundation that is now supporting the mighty military burden she has been and is now subjected to. One of the notable phases of preparedness of Germany was the success in handling her agricultural resources, providing food and supplies within her own borders.

Covering the general question of efficiency and preparedness, there are two phases of the subject—the preparedness for war and the preparedness for peace. In the one, we make provision to defend our land from physical invasion by enemies, while in the other, the necessity is the protection of our industries and our commerce. Thus preparedness for us has a double meaning, but in both of these agriculture plays a leading part. If I were asked to state in a word a summary of the whole situation, it would be that scientific accuracy must displace guess-work; that the administration of the government must be for all the people and that the common good must be the paramount consideration; that the politician must go and the statesman must appear.

The bane of democracy and its greatest menace is subverting every issue to consideration from the angle of party politics instead of that of statesmanship and general welfare. The concept is that, like love and war, all is fair in politics, and that politics must dominate public business. It is not an exaggeration to say that at least one half of every dollar raised by taxation is wasted by the grossly inefficient way in which public business is done. Many well-informed persons know, and I think most of us believe, that if the hundreds of millions of money appropriated for defense could have been wisely expended under the direction of expert advice that we have had from our army and

navy boards, we should at this time have been in a position where a strong defense could be made against any attack upon our coast line and give us a sense of security that in these troubled times we can not now feel. We are approaching a world's crisis, which will come as an aftermath of the awful war. It is exceedingly important that no time be lost in preparing to meet it, both from the angle of a possible war and (no less) from the angle of a certain peace and the readjustment that must follow it.

In view of the seriousness of the future that confronts us, it is nothing less than a crime to permit pull and politics to have any influence whatever in bringing our country to the best possible position to meet any crisis that awaits us; and any man who insists upon continuing to play politics should be denounced as a public enemy. There is no subject that it is more important to take completely out of the domain of politics than the adjustment of our tariff. It is the one effective means of raising revenues and protecting our market from becoming a dumping-ground for the rest of the world. As matters stand to-day, the United States is the one great cash market. It is the world's largest consumer and its means are ample. A suggestion has been made that the government should, through the Department of State, have the consuls deal with the matter of importations and if they found that the goods offered would demoralize our markets, they might withhold their consent and prevent shipments. This would be an unusual and extraordinary measure. Would these government agents be in a position to accurately determine the issues? Would not foreign countries resent such drastic action? Would it not be regarded as gratuitous and unwarranted? It would create no end of friction and would probably result in long and vexatious delay and, possibly, international complications. We have reached the time when we should endeavor to make friends abroad, instead of enemies. The best plan is to follow the custom and deal with these questions through the usual channels of tariff legislation. Before we go far, we shall undoubtedly find it expedient for Congress to fix maximum and minimum rates, with a wide margin between them, and authorize the president, on the recommendation of a real, bona fide, non-partisan tariff commission, to put such rates of duty in force as the exigencies of the case may demand from time to time, subject, of course, to review by Congress. To any thoughtful man it must be apparent that membership upon such a commission is a man's job, and the body charged with this duty should have nothing else before it. Dealing with the tariff in this manner will ultimately remove it from political controversy, will stabilize business and give us tranquility where now we have turmoil.